



Iowa Department of Education

***Modified Allowable Growth for
Dropout Prevention Annual Report***

Iowa Department of Education

Grimes State Office Building
Des Moines, IA 50319

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State of Iowa
Department of Education
Grimes State Office Building
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What is Modified Allowable Growth for Returning Dropouts and Dropout Prevention Programs?

Modified Allowable Growth for Dropout Prevention (MAG-DoP) is a funding mechanism to assist districts in providing targeted services and programs for students at a local level. The money that is levied and the 25 percent local match become categorical funding and is to be used specifically for the purpose of providing programming for students identified as returning and potential dropouts.

"Categorical funding" as defined by the 281 – IAC Chapter 281.98, means financial support from state and federal governments that is targeted for particular categories of students, special programs, or special purposes. This support is in addition to school district or area education agency general purpose revenue, is beyond the basic educational program, and most often has restrictions on its use. Where categorical funding requires a local match, that local match also is considered to be categorical funding. Categorical funding includes both grants in aid and budgetary allocations. Although grants in aid and budgetary allocations are both categorical funding, they are defined separately to distinguish unique characteristics of each type of categorical funding. Chapter 281.98 describes appropriate uses of grants in aid, budgetary allocations and tax levies and funds. In addition Chapter 281.98 also addresses indirect cost recovery, restriction on supplanting, mandatory carry forward, discontinued funding, expenditures, restriction on duplication, excess expenditures, commingling, and uses of levies and funds.

All districts shall follow the guidelines for financial management of budgetary allocations/categorical funding as set out in 281 – Iowa Administrative Code Chapter 98. These can be viewed at:

<http://search.legis.state.ia.us/nxt/gateway.dll/ar/iac?f=templates&fn=default.htm>

Purpose for using MAG-DoP

Modified allowable growth for dropout prevention (MAG-DoP) is not funding that is generated to provide school wide programming to prevent students from becoming at-risk ("preventing at riskedness"). It is intended to be used for serving students who left high school and have returned and to prevent those who are MOST at-risk from leaving school, completing school or progressing in school. When districts consider using this funding stream for programming, the district is asking the local property tax payers to invest in the district (as a community) so the students don't drop out and become a burden to state and local resources at a later point in life.

Funding for these programs must focus on two types of students, returning dropouts and potential dropouts as defined in Iowa Code Section 257.39:

"Returning dropouts" are resident pupils who have been enrolled in a public or nonpublic school in any of grades **seven through twelve** who withdrew from school for a reason other than transfer to another school or school district and who subsequently enrolled in a public school in the district.

"Potential dropouts" are resident pupils who are enrolled in a public or nonpublic school who demonstrate poor school adjustment as indicated by **two or more of the following:**

- a. High rate of absenteeism, truancy, or frequent tardiness.

- b. Limited or no extracurricular participation or lack of identification with school, including but not limited to, expressed feelings of not belonging.
- c. Poor grades, including but not limited to, failing in one or more school subjects or grade levels.
- d. Low achievement scores in reading or mathematics which reflects achievement at two years or more below grade level.
- e. Children in grades kindergarten through three who meet the definition of at-risk children adopted by the department of education.

Once districts have identified students as meeting the criteria for returning or potential dropouts, districts must provide supports for those students. Districts are required to provide “alternative options” in accordance with Iowa Code Section 280.19A. The alternative options offered by a district would be locally defined. Using modified allowable growth for dropout prevention is one way to provide those services. Students who are identified may need intensive, on-going, individual supports, supplemental, or moderate supports. Students previously identified as a potential dropout who need minimal on-going supports should continue to be included and supported and staff should continue to dedicate time to serving the needs of the identified students.

Setting Priorities

Districts could target the services in several ways from providing individualized supports or small group activities to an alternative school/program. All services should be targeted and explicit for the identified population for a specific identified need.

First and foremost, any student who has dropped out and returned is the primary target for MAG-DoP funding. The money should focus on recovery, re-entry and re-engagement of students who left school.

- 1) Recovery involves finding students who have dropped out of school and reconnecting with them to return to school. This can be accomplished by positive adult role models, advisors, advocates placing phone calls, conducting dropout walks, contacting friends, relatives, etc.
- 2) Re-entry is supporting students to have the ability to return to school at any time during the year and pick up where he or she left off or begin/finish coursework to earn credits to apply toward graduation. This can be accomplished by online coursework, component recovery, credit recovery, or focusing on essential concepts and skills for graduation.
- 3) Re-engagement is getting students to become connected within the school context. This can be accomplished by focusing on the student’s relationship with the school community: the people (adults and peers), the structures (rules, facilities, and schedules), the curriculum and content, the pedagogy, and the opportunities (curricular, co-curricular and extracurricular). The degree to which a student returns and is able to re-engage in school is dependent on the quality, depth and breadth of the student’s relationship with the various aspects of the life and work of the school. (Yazzie-Mintz, 2006)

The second priority would be any student who would meet all four of the criteria for a potential dropout, then any student who meets three of the criteria and lastly for the students who meet two of the criteria. These are the students who are at the **highest risk of dropping out**. Students who would only meet one of the above defined criteria would certainly be at-risk but not qualify for programming with the modified allowable growth funding.

Students previously identified in specific subgroups should not be identified for the mere fact that the student is already identified in a subgroup or that research with a broad group of students shows that group of students could be at risk or don't perform as well as other students. Examples of inappropriately identifying students and using the MAG-DoP funding could be, but not limited to, poor students, African American students, a student with a disability and/or a student who wears "goth" or a student who has green hair. Every student served in programming with the MAG-DoP funding must be because s/he is specifically identified using the above criteria for dropout, returning dropout and potential dropout from the Iowa Code Section 257.39.

Providing a Tiered System of Supports

A tiered system is an educational model that delineates three or more levels of instructional interventions based on gaps in student skills. A tier is a level in a response to intervention system that includes interventions and supports for a clearly defined group of students. Using a tiered system of supports can address the needs of struggling learners by providing interventions at increasing levels of intensity (Stuart, 2009). The students most disaffected with school would be in the tertiary tier.

The model used for preventing potential dropouts from leaving school is a three tiered prevention model of supports for students which includes three levels of support.

1. Primary prevention
2. Secondary prevention
3. Tertiary prevention

Primary prevention is instruction and programming for all students or has a broad scope in nature and reaches about 80-85 percent of students. The educational and behavioral supports that should be provided to ALL kids, to assist them in being successful in school (core academic program -ICC, athletics, PBIS-core level, DARE, Character Counts...) is considered primary prevention and should not be funded with MAG-DoP funds. Any programming set up for students that is intended for ALL students, whether it is a good dropout prevention strategy or not, is considered general education programming. No district-wide or building-wide programming can be provided with this money, otherwise that is supplanting. Examples of this could be the funding of positions such as guidance counselors, deans or administrators to perform the duties expected of them when working with all students and would be considered an inappropriate use of funds (IAC 281-98.1).

Prevention Tier	Core Elements
Primary (ALL students)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to general education “core” curriculum • Access to after school programming/clubs/organizations • Behavioral and instructional expectations defined • Behavioral and instructional expectations taught • System to acknowledge appropriate behavioral/academic successes • Continuous collection and use of data for decision-making • Universal Screening

Adapted from (Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports Technical Assistance Center, 2009)

Secondary prevention is considered supplemental services and supports that are in addition to or above and beyond general education programming. Secondary prevention would be directed toward smaller groups of students, who are experiencing the same types of challenges or barriers. Instruction, interventions, supports and services could focus on skill development, social skills, specific reading interventions and/or afterschool programs focused on students who have similar needs.

Prevention Tier	Core Elements
Secondary (Some students)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress monitoring for students at risk (locally defined) • System for increasing structure and predictability through supplemental supports

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • System for increasing contingent adult feedback through supplemental supports • System for linking academic and behavioral performance through supplemental supports • System for increasing explicit home/school communication • Continuous collection and use of data for decision-making
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Adapted from (Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports Technical Assistance Center, 2009)

Tertiary prevention is for the top 5-8 percent of kids who need individual assistance to focus on overcoming any of the issues/challenges/barriers that s/he may have. The majority of the students who are served with MAG-DoP funds are those in the tertiary level. Tertiary interventions/supports are defined as supports focused on meeting students' individual needs based on their unique characteristics and specific circumstances (e.g., significance of academic needs in reading/math, differences in the severity of behavior, complexity of environment, barriers), and should be flexible, focused and personalized for each student. In establishing a framework to intervene effectively with individual students whose behavior interferes with school progress and interpersonal relationships, it is necessary to consider the importance of eliminating barriers for success and providing appropriate programming at an individual level and having multiple alternative options for students to chose from.

Prevention Tier	Core Elements
Tertiary (few/individual students)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team-based comprehensive assessment • Individualized intervention based on assessment information focusing on (a) prevention of problem contexts, (b) instruction on functionally equivalent skills, and instruction on desired performance skills, (c) strategies for placing problem behavior on extinction, (d) strategies for enhancing contingence reward of desired behavior, and (e) use of negative or safety consequences if needed. • Linking of academic and behavior supports on an individual level • Functional Behavioral Assessment • Individualized instructional interventions • Continuous collection and use of data for decision-making/continuous progress monitoring

Adapted from (Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports Technical Assistance Center, 2009)

Works Cited

Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports Technical Assistance Center. (2009, March). Retrieved November 1, 2010, from Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports: <http://www.pbis.org/research/default.aspx>

Stuart, S. R. (2009). A Collaborative Planning Framework for Teachers Implementing Tiered Instruction. *Teaching Exceptional Children, Vol 42, No 2* , pp. 52-57.

Yazzie-Mintz, E. (2006). *Voices of Students on Engagement: A Report on the 2006 High School Survey of Student Engagement.* Bloomington, IN: Center for Evaluation and Education Policy.

CODE CITATION

257.40 (2) Approval of programs for returning dropouts and dropout prevention – annual report

Beginning January 15, 2007, the department shall submit an annual report to the chairpersons and ranking members of the senate and house education committees that includes the way school districts in the previous school year used modified allowable growth approved under subsection 1; identifies, by grade level, age, and district size, the students in the dropout and dropout prevention programs for which the department approves a request; describes school district progress toward increasing student achievement and attendance for the students in the programs; and describes how the school districts are using the revenues from the modified allowable growth to improve student achievement among minority subgroups.

Service Summary Report for 2009-2010

This form is for the district to record the services that were actually provided for students who were returning dropouts or students identified as potential dropouts.

Directions for Districts to Complete the Service Summary Report:

When completing the Service Summary Report for 09-10, please be sure to address how ALL students identified in EASIER (fall 09/spring 10) were served with modified allowable growth for dropout prevention funds. It is a district choice how they record the information when adding programs to the service summary, following are some considerations or suggestions for input on the “add program” section:

- If providing services at the K-3 level, please add program separately.
- When selecting program focus, select one focus for reporting results/outcomes and list the secondary purpose(s) in the narrative. For example, an alternative school might focus on completing school and in the narrative of Needs Addressed any secondary program focus would be listed such as staying in school, progressing in school.
- Do not restate the interventions or research based practices in the narrative of Needs Addressed, as that was completed under the heading “research based practices.”
- Think about categorizing the programming before entering. Add programs by level served (K-3, 4-8, 9-12), by programming type (reading interventions), by service (literacy coaches).

Upon opening the Service Summary Report, Districts will be able to view the number of students actually identified in the fall 2009 and spring 2010 submissions of *at risk #1 (students identified as potential or returning dropouts and in a program funded by modified allowable growth)*.

The next section allows the district to add programming provided. Districts may add as many programs as needed. Directions

1. New/Continued if this is a new program check the NEW radio button. If it is a program that was operated by the district in the previous year, check the CONTINUED radio button.

2. Program Name identifies the name of the program. Districts that list the program as XYZ School District dropout prevention program will not be approved and will be asked to resubmit the service summary with corrections.
3. School Level of programming refers to elementary, middle/junior high, high school. Check the box or boxes that apply.
4. The Targeted Audience is the population of students for which services are provided. Districts may want to consider separating programs for returning dropouts and those for potential dropouts. An example for returning dropouts might be an offsite alternative program that serves students who are returning dropouts, aged 19-21 and needs to be close to the business community for internship programs and minimize transportation needs. Compared to a program for potential dropouts in an alternative program in the comprehensive HS that serves students identified with 2 of the 4 criteria and the needs addressed would be attendance and credit accrual by using a multitude of strategies such as component recovery, online coursework, independent study courses, structured tutoring and specific career programming to address specific needs for individual students.
5. The Program Focus should address the barriers the students come up against that lead to dropping out so that students stay in school, progress in school and complete school. Staying in school includes focusing on whether the student remained enrolled in school or dropped out of school without earning a HS diploma. Progressing in school would look at whether a student is making normal progress toward graduation and the highest grade completed. Completing school focuses on whether or not a student earned a high school diploma or not. Some examples include, an alternative school may focus on students completing school, whereas an alternative program in a comprehensive school may focus on students staying in school. A reading intervention program may focus on students progressing in school and a mentoring program may focus on students staying in school. Research based strategies based on this premise can be found on the Doing What Works website: http://dww.ed.gov/topic/?T_ID=24

Below is a sample table showing state criteria to show what needs might be addressed at each level. Remember, these are EXAMPLES for guidance.

Grade	Staying in school	Progressing in school	Completing school
Elem K-3	Excessive absences/Attendance No Connection Minimal Parent connection K-3 at risk	Not proficient/Achievement Grade retention K-3 at risk	
Elem 4-6	Excessive absences/Attendance No Connection Negative Behavior Suspensions Bullying/harassment	< 25th%ile Achievement Failing Grades Grade retention	
MS 6-8	Excessive absences/Attendance No Connection/No participation Negative Behavior	< 25th%ile Achievement Failing Grades Grade retention	Grade retention

	Suspensions Bullying/harassment		
HS 9-12	Excessive absences/Attendance No Connection/No participation Negative Behavior Suspensions Bullying/harassment	< 30th%ile Achievement Failing Grades Grade retention Overaged/undercredited	Not graduating on time Unemployed/not college ready

6. Research Based/Evidence Based Strategies are those found on the [Doing What Works](#) website, or those listed on the application.
7. Students Needs Addressed should define what the dropout prevention programs were trying to address. Districts would need to specifically identify the population (e.g., students aged 19-21, who are returning dropouts) and the specific approaches used that addressed the barriers experienced by returning and potential dropouts. Please refer to some EXAMPLES below:

Program Name: Happy Campers Alternative School

Student Needs: *Students served at Happy Campers were returning dropouts and were between the ages of 19-21. The majority of the students did not have a connection with the comprehensive HS and needed a flexible schedule to meet work schedules and family commitments. Students were given explicit instruction tied directly to the community and in the work setting for the relevance to be important. A focus on daily living skills such as financial management, parenting, child development and mental health needs were addressed. Transportation and day care was provided for all students at no cost. Each student was assigned an advocate to monitor daily, weekly and on-going student/family issues related to being young adults without a diploma.*

Program Name: ACHIEVE SUCCESS

Student Needs: *ACHIEVE SUCCESS is a school based youth services program that provides case management services to students who meet any combination of the four criteria. The focus is on supporting students and families so students will stay in school and feel that there is an adult at the school that cares about them. Case managers provide intensive case management support services, assessment of individual need, educational support (refer to checklist of strategies), individualized goal setting and/or coordination of community based or service support with a variety of agencies. ACHIEVE SUCCESS supports families in areas of education, employment, mental health services, substance abuse services, mentoring and recreation. Small and large group activities in our after school and summer programs focus on social skill building, drug/violence prevention and service learning.*

Program Name: Transition Classroom

Student Needs: *Students who are returning to the district from a residential facility (no connection, attendance, credit accrual) are assigned to a transition classroom in any of our middle/high schools. This allows us to review credits earned while students were out of the district, assign the correct classes to take, assign the student to an advocate for a connection back at school and complete any courses started/not completed whether that was before the student left the district or was in the middle of when at placement.*

Program Name: Intervention Specialist

Student Needs: *Students who have less than 88 percent attendance (district rate is at 90 percent) and have no connection (fighting, disruptive behavior, office referrals) to school meet with the intervention specialist weekly for scheduled skill development and an as needed when behaviors are elevated and disruptive to the learning environment. The interventionist also engages students in after school service learning projects to connect with the community.*

Program Name: PBIS

Student Needs: *Students who have been identified at the tertiary level of the RTI process as having no connection to school and excessive absences/tardies will participate in intensive/individualized social skills instruction and skill development in ways to positively connect with school.*

8. Results/Outcomes are the “what happened” compared to “what was expected” with the program. Specific outcomes should be identified in regards to the program focus and the specific population served. Districts that enter text in this box that states an increase in overall achievement or an increase in the district graduation rate as result will not be approved and asked to resubmit. Be sure that all students identified in EASIER submissions are accounted for in your results/outcomes text.

Examples of measuring results based on program focus could include:

- *Staying in school:* measure attendance, number of days enrolled, graduation, etc
- *Progressing in school:* measure credits earned, grade promotion, making progress in their grade, returning after dropping out
- *Completing school:* measure whether a student earned a HS diploma, returns the next year after peers graduate

EXAMPLES:

Happy Campers Alternative School:

Of the 30 seniors, 2 graduated early, 19 graduated on time and 9 returned to school this fall.

Of the 21 seniors who graduated, 17 have full time jobs, 2 are enrolled in the CC program and 2 are unknown.

Of the 18 juniors, 10 earned enough credits to be on track, 4 took summer school to add credits, 4 were enrolled in correspondence or online courses that are incomplete.

ACHIEVE SUCCESS:

Of the 324 students served in this program, 90 percent of the students identified met 1 goal area (increased attendance, higher grades, mental health services); 50 percent met all of their goals; 80 percent of the students referred for mental health services followed through with scheduling an appointment.

Transition Classroom:

Of the 13 students who returned from residential placement, 10 are still enrolled in school and have completed a total of 18 credits since returning. A survey given to the parents of the students revealed parents were 91 percent satisfied that their student had the opportunity of the transition program and was not just thrown back into the “big” middle school. Parents also stated their students seemed more connected to school. Of the 8 percent that we found to be dissatisfied, a follow-up meeting was requested and we received feedback on how we could connect with the families and students to support that transition.

NOTE: Examples listed are just that, examples to assist in understanding what is needed.

Professional Development guidance is in the [HELP Section 3](#) Evidence Based programs and [Professional Development](#).

Statistics and Data for FY 2009 (2009-2010 school year)

For the 2009-2010 school year 337 school districts initially applied for modified allowable growth and 334 districts were approved by the School Budget Review Committee to levy a local tax for Dropout Prevention Programs. A total of \$106,795,694 was approved by the SBRC on **June XX, 2010**, with an additional 25 percent match from the local districts for a total of \$142,038,273 generated statewide for serving returning dropouts and those students at the highest risk of dropping out.

In 2009-2010, a total of 490,417 students were enrolled in public schools (Source: Iowa Department of Education, Bureau of Planning, Research and Evaluation). Districts projected they would serve 120,128 students identified as returning/potential dropouts using modified allowable growth funding. According to the Fall 2009 collection of EASIER, districts reported actually serving 73,173 students, which accounts for 14.9 percent of students enrolled in Iowa public schools PK-12.

The 2009-2010 school year was the second year the Department of Education collected student level data from districts for their total number of identified students who are at risk (academic, personal-social, career-vocational) and those who are the returning or potential dropouts (Iowa Administrative Code 281—12.2).

Districts approved for modified allowable growth funding by size:

0 – 299:	45 districts
300 – 599:	101 districts
600 – 999:	83 districts
1,000 – 2,499:	74 districts
2,500 – 7,499:	21 districts
7,500 and above:	<u>10 districts</u>
	334 districts

Grade Levels of Programming Provided:

Elementary school students:	209 districts
Middle/Junior High school students:	234 districts
High School students:	316 districts

Focus of Programming Provided:

Staying in School:	266 districts
Progressing in School:	298 districts
Completing School:	304 districts

District Focus of Targeted Audience:

Returning Dropouts:	242 districts
Potential Dropouts:	311 districts

Districts provide information in the Comprehensive School Improvement Plan regarding how the modified allowable growth will improve achievement for their students identified as potential & returning dropouts and those identified minority subgroups.